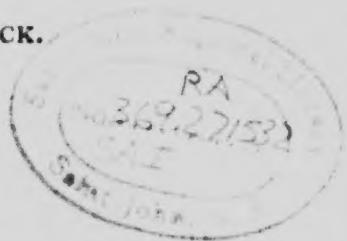




ST. ANDREW'S SOCIETY
OF ST. JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK.



PRESENTATION
OF
The President's Chair
ON THE
One Hundred and Tenth Anniversary
OF THE
Founding of the Society.

1798

MARCH 8TH.

1908

ST. JOHN, N. B.
THE SAINT JOHN GLOBE PUBLISHING COMPANY, LIMITED.

1908





PROLOGUE.



DURING the Summer of 1906 two members of the Society, who had the opportunity of frequently meeting, determined, if possible, to induce their brother member, Mr. John Rogerson, who is highly gifted in the art of wood-carving, to put into execution a long cherished idea that had been present in his mind, and had for some years been occasionally spoken of, namely, the carving of a chair for St. Andrew's Society of St. John. Indeed, during the preparation of the History of the Society, Mr. Rogerson had been urged to proceed with such work, but he had formed the wish that, should the project be carried out, the chair should be made of wood grown in Scotland, and the consequent practical difficulties delayed its accomplishment.

These two members accordingly approached Mr. Rogerson and found him ready and most desirous to engage in the work. They discussed the matter with other members who became interested in the subject, and the following, named in the order in which they stand on the Roll of Membership, finally agreed to become the donors :

P. ROBERTSON INCHES	MURRAY MACLAREN
J. GORDON FORBES	BEVERLEY R. MACAULAY
JAMES F. ROBERTSON	J. ROY CAMPBELL
JOHN ROGERSON	ROBERT B. PATERSON
JOHN P. MACINTYRE	JAMES JACK
THOMAS A. RANKINE (ob.)	J. ROBERTSON MCINTOSH

The donors, calling to mind that the eighth day of March, 1908, would be the one hundred and tenth Anniversary of the founding of the Society, resolved that they would contribute towards the marking of that interesting date by presenting the chair to the Society at that time. The project received much impetus when in the Summer of 1907 Mr. Rogerson obtained leave of absence from the Dominion Government, by whom he is employed, thus affording him an opportunity to visit Scotland, his native country, and to collect the material while there. This lent much, by way of anticipation, to the successful fulfilment of the idea, but when Mr. Rogerson returned with ancient oak and holly selected from the homes of Bruce and Burns, the donors rejoiced that they could present a chair of material the historical associations of which could be vouched for.

While having introduced into the design features incidental to the Society, no efforts have been spared to secure a strict accordance with national characteristics.

The following pages contain a history of the various portions of the chair and an account of their collection, and of incidents in connection with the obtaining of designs—all as related by Mr. Rogerson.

The donors now present the chair to the Society for the official use of the President. It is a happy coincidence that the first occupant is a native born Scotsman.

They regret that since the inception of the project one of their members has passed away. Mr. Rankine was a cordial supporter of the movement, and the donors record that Mrs. Rankine desired that her husband's wishes should be fulfilled.

NARRATIVE.

On the 24th May, 1907, I sailed from Montreal in the good ship "Victorian," of the Allan Line, and after a pleasant voyage we landed in Liverpool on the afternoon of Saturday, 1st June, being the same day of the week and month that I set foot in America fifty-eight years before. With but a few minutes to spare I caught a train for Scotland and after changing trains three times I arrived in Lochmaben, Dumfriesshire, my native town, at seven o'clock that evening. When I was nearing the end of the journey I asked a fellow traveller, whom I afterwards learned was Provost of the Town, whether he could give me the name of an hotel in Lochmaben. He told me that I would find the King's Arms a comfortable house. This I certainly did—a very home-like kind of house where one is well treated. After tea I took a walk round the town to see what changes had taken place since I went away. I found that only about half a dozen houses had been built during all those fifty-eight years. I noticed that they keep the streets clean and that they have good water and sewerage. On returning I be-thought myself of the fact that a fellow Canadian, the Rev. Albert G. McKinnon, was the Minister of one of the Free Churches there and I at once called to see him, and was most kindly and hospitably received. When I got back to the hotel I found eight or ten townies in the sitting-room, whom I joined, and soon the landlord, a Mr. Henderson, said to the company: "Gentlemen, we have with us to-night a friend from Canada and a native of this town," and thereupon they all received me very heartily. I enjoyed most thoroughly hearing the old familiar Doric tongue; some of them thought that for one who had been away as long as I had my accent had not changed very much. When the company broke up

at ten o'clock one of the party, a Mr. Dryden, stayed behind, and as he and Mr. Henderson and myself were talking together on the street between the hotel and the statue of Bruce, which is there, I told them that as well as having a wish to see my old home and friends I was there for the purpose of trying to get Scotch Oak, and historic if possible, out of which to make a President's Chair for the St. Andrew's Society in St. John, New Brunswick, and Mr. Henderson then said that I had struck the right man in Mr. Dryden, as he had some wood over eight hundred years old that he had got at the castle where Robert the Bruce was born, and Mr. Dryden said yes,—that he had some, but he had given a good deal away and used some himself, but what he had left he would give me; then Mr. Henderson said, besides that, he had got a piece of wood that grew on Burns' first grave, and that as I was such an enthusiastic Scotchman and going to Canada he would give it to me. We said good-night to Mr. Dryden and promised to go to his place at Millis Bank after dinner the next day. Then Mr. Henderson took me into the house and he went right to a cupboard that was there between the chimney and the side wall and opened first one door and then another with keys until he finally reached the wood he had spoken of and then said: "There's a piece of wood that grew on Burns' grave," and gave it to me; it was four and one-quarter inches long by two and one-quarter in diameter with the bark on it. It is part of a small holly tree that was planted on Burns' first grave when he was buried in the northeast corner of St. Michael's Churchyard in Dumfries in the year 1796. In 1815 his remains were removed to a vault in a more appropriate part of the same graveyard and a mausoleum in the form of a Grecian temple was there erected; at this time the small tree was removed. A part of it is in use as a gavel in the Lodge of Freemasons, No. 53 Kilwinning, in which Burns was made a Mason, and another portion is used in the Lodge at Helmsdale, Sutherlandshire, and the part we have is the third, and so far as is known the only other section existing. This piece was given

to Mr. Henderson by a Mr. Crawford about fifteen years ago, when the latter was a very old man. Mr. Crawford had had it for many years and had told Mr. Henderson its history as now related. The lion rampant in the Bruce shield at the top of the chair is made out of this piece of holly.

The next day, Sunday, I attended service at the Auld Kirk, where I was baptized seventy years ago and I enjoyed it very much; good congregational singing with familiar tunes and an excellent sermon by the Rev. Neil Ray, the Minister. The service being over I was introduced to Mr. Ray and we had a pleasant chat. After dinner Mr. Henderson and I went to Mr. Dryden's, at Millis Bank, which is about a mile and a half from the hotel; we found him at home and met his mother, an old woman now, but very bright; she remembered my relatives and we had an enjoyable talk. Then we went out to the grist mill that Mr. Dryden owns and runs, and he pointed out the wood he was going to give me, but which was down in a sort of a cellar in the mill. I could easily see that it would not do to work with it on Sunday, so I said to Mr. Dryden that I would return on Monday morning; he agreed that that would be better. Then the three of us came back to the town and continued on about a mile and a half to the opposite side of the village to Lochmaben Castle, where Mr. Dryden got the old oak wood. The Castle is close to the side of the Loch and is surrounded by very large trees, and some are actually growing inside. The Castle is a complete ruin, but some parts of the walls are standing to a height of thirty or forty feet and about five or six feet thick. We got into the Castle by a small wooden bridge that spans the moat, which is still easily seen. When inside, my friends pointed out where the armoury was and where the King's purse was kept; they also showed me a hollow in a stone that was used (much in the same way that a mortar and pestle would now be used) for bruising wheat in the early days in order to make their bread when they could not reach a mill, or, indeed, there might not be any mill to go to; then Mr. Dryden pointed

out the place in the Loch where he got the wood; it is about two hundred feet from the shore. To explain how he came to find the wood he told me that a number of years ago the outlet of the lake was lowered four or five feet in order to reclaim land. Some time after this was done he was out rowing one day in one of the boats that are kept there for hire, when his oar struck something and he stopped to see what it was; his interest being aroused he went ashore and returned more prepared to investigate and after a good deal of labor he succeeded in securing about a cart load of wood, which turned out to be beautiful black oak, perfectly sound and almost as black and solid as ebony. In a history of the Castle, which has been written, mention is made of "lake dwellings," but up to the time that Mr. Dryden found the wood no trace of them had been discovered. The foundation of these lake dwellings was of stone and timber put together out in the lake, and so connected with the Castle that if those holding the fortress were finally overpowered they, or such of them as were left, could make their escape to this retreat in the lake, and there be in a position to still further defend themselves.

On the Monday morning following my visit to the Castle I went again to Mr. Dryden's house and I was prepared then to go through any kind of dirty or rough places. The wood was away down in a flat or cellar of the mill; it had been put there so that it would not crack. We had a boy there and handed it up, one to the other, until we got it to the top floor and then went to look for something to put it in, and finally found a big sack and crammed it into that. Then I asked him how I would get it into town—if I should send a team for it? He said: "No; there is a boy here, a big stout boy, he will wheel it into town for you." So he did, wheeled it in a barrow. It was a pretty heavy load, too, to go so far with, up hill and down dale; however, he got it in and fortunately I met him just as he was coming away, and, of course, I treated him as well as I could—gave him some little money and made him happy. Then I had the wood sent to Glasgow

and, later on, saw it safely into the hands of my friend there, Mr. James F. Martin. Portions of this black oak are plainly discernible in the chair; one piece with Celtic plaited-work design above the centre panel, another below the centre panel and one on each side.

I next went to Dumfries to visit some cousins and started wood hunting there, too. On speaking to my relations about it one of them said there was a mill in Maxwelltown, across the river from Dumfries, so I went over there to a mill owned by a Mr. Callendar, and asked him for Scotch oak. He replied: "We have very little oak down in this part of the country, but such as I have you are welcome to it." After looking around he handed me a piece and said: "This was cut from a tree that grew close to the bank of this river, the Nith, where Burns was in the habit of coming a very great deal." This he said without knowing what use I was going to make of it, and after he had given it to me I told him my story. There is no doubt but that Burns frequently sat under this very tree. I have a history of Dumfries, in which it describes him in his latter days as making almost daily visits to this place, and here he thought and wrote, and wrote and thought again. I have used this piece of oak in making the two front posts and the two side stretchers under the seat.

I must now refer to my visit to Glasgow, where I met Mr. James F. Martin, to whom the success of my mission is largely due. Mr. Martin received me most heartily and gave me much valuable advice and assistance. He from time to time kindly received the wood that I secured and personally attended to its being carefully packed and shipped to St. John.

My next efforts were made at Beith, in Ayrshire; this is a very large furniture manufacturing place, and my friends had said that I would be likely to come across some good seasoned material there. I went to the factory to which I had been specially directed and told the superintendent what I wanted. He replied that he could not supply me with such

wood; he said they worked American oak altogether and all the factories in the town did the same, because they found it worked much easier than native wood. He then called the foreman and told him what I was after, and said: "I am thinking of sending this man through to Dunlop—to the new mills at Dunlop." The foreman said: "That is the best place for him to go; he will get what he is after there, because they collect trees from all parts of Scotland, pretty near." So they told me to go back to the junction. This I did and at the station I met a man and asked him the way to Dunlop. He took me by the arm and said: "You see that little road between those trees on the crest of the hill?" "Yes," said I. "Well, you follow that road through among the trees and when you get over that hill a bit you will find the mill." So away I started. I was told it was about a mile and a half away. When I got to the crest of the hill and stretched my neck, blame the mill could I see. I pegged away as well as I could over that hill and over another. I began to think I must surely be on the wrong road. Then I met a man, a nice looking fellow, and asked him if I was on the right road; he replied: "Yes, you are on the right road; the mill is just over the hill, down in the hollow there a bit;" and confound the thing, I had to go down this hollow and on to another hill. When I got there I met a curious looking chap coming out from a farmhouse towards the road. I was going towards him, and we both sort of met. I said to him: "Can you tell me where the new mill at Dunlop is?" and without answering he took a strong grip of my coat collar with his left hand and leading me along some thirty feet into the middle of the road and still holding on to me and pointing in a kind of dramatic way with his other hand he said: "Do you see yon lum?" "Yes," said I. "Well, that's it." He turned off abruptly and walked away and never said another blessed word. I kind of laughed and said to myself: "You are a comical chap." I at last reached the mill, which is nearer four and a half miles than one and a half. There I met a Mr. Howatson, who had charge of the

office, and I told him what I wanted. He insisted on my sitting down and talking the matter over. He said: "We can supply you with wood from a number of different directions," and he added. "I have a piece here that I have a good mind to give you; it came out of the town residence in Glasgow of the Dukes of Argyle and is over four hundred years old." I need hardly say I was much delighted when he gave it to me. When I told my friend, Mr. Martin, about it he said: "You have been having great luck; why they are making snuff boxes, glove boxes and all kinds of little fancy things out of the wood from that building, and I am more than surprised that you got such a large piece." It was nearly six inches thick and about three feet long, and turned out four and a half or five inches of solid wood. Mr. Martin and I determined to verify, if possible, our information about this building, and so we visited the premises and the result of our enquiries is embodied in the following letter:

ALBION LEATHER WORKS WAREHOUSE,
63 Brunswick Street, Glasgow, 11th June, 1907.

Facts gathered relative to the piece of oak Mr. John Rogerson secured at Messrs. Robert Howie & Sons' Timber Yard at Dunlop, Ayrshire, and said by them to have come out of an old building, 29 Argyle Street, Glasgow.

To authenticate this the writer, James F. Martin, called with Mr. Rogerson at 29 Argyle Street, and interviewed Colonel Robert Howie, of the firm of Messrs. P. & R. Fleming & Co., Ironmongers, the proprietors, when we ascertained that their firm were proprietors of back premises that extended both backward and also eastward, the eastern portion having a frontage in Stockwell Street. In 1903 the firm of Messrs. P. & R. Fleming & Co. pulled down all their old back premises and erected new and modern warehouses.

The old building that fronted Stockwell Street, Colonel Howie informed us, was originally an old mansion house built in the year 1617 and was owned and occupied by the then Duke of Argyle as his town residence; before this old property was taken down in 1903 an oil painting of this historic building was painted for Colonel Howie and it was shown to us as it now adorns the walls of the Colonel's private room.

The rafters of this old building were tied with wood instead of iron nails—pointing to their antiquity. Colonel Howie informed us that he personally had given his friends, Messrs. Robert Howie & Sons, of Dunlop, the rafters of this old building, and there is not the shadow of doubt but the piece of old oak now secured by Mr. John Rogerson is part of one of the rafters from this old historic mansion.

JAMES F. MARTIN.

This piece of wood has been used to make the cross stretcher in the front of the chair under the seat, and the two cross bars immediately above and below the black oak with Celtic plaited-work design and the cross bar immediately below the centre panel.

At the mills at Dunlop I got the greater part of the wood to put in the chair. I gave them a list of the sizes I wanted, and each piece was labelled with the name of the locality from which it came. They keep a record there of the wood, where it comes from and the age of it and when it was sawed, which shows the amount of seasoning it has had. I would like to call particular attention to the piece I have used for the seat of the chair and which I was very glad to get in a single portion as I had desired. It is off a fine oak plank twenty-two inches broad that was cut from a tree which grew in the grounds of Loudoun Castle. I was told that the stump of the tree is still there. Other sections of the chair that came from Loudoun Castle grounds are the main piece forming the top of the back (in which the Bruce shield is worked) and the centre panel and the two back posts and the rail under the back of the seat and the two side carriers for the seat.

"Loudoun's bonnie woods and braes
"I maun leave them a', lassie."

The wood for the arms and the centre cross stretcher under the seat beyond doubt came from the estate of the Marquis of Tweeddale, in Haddington.

The following is a copy of a letter from the gentleman I met at Dunlop referring to the Loudoun and Haddington woods :

NEW MILL GRAIN AND SAW MILLS,
DUNLOP, December 11th, 1907.

ROBERT HOWIE & SONS,

Wood Merchants, Joiners and Cartwrights.

DEAR MR. ROGERSON:

I was very pleased to get your letter and to hear you are getting on well with the chair. I am sure it will be really unique, not only because of the loving care you have taken in its design and workmanship, but also because of the historical associations and the antiquity of some parts of the oak used in its construction.

I am sorry I cannot give very full details of the Haddington oak, as the man we bought it from died some years ago, but a considerable number of the trees we bought from him came from the Yester Estate, and the probability, I might almost say the certainty, is that it came from that estate. It is one of the largest estates in Haddington and belongs to the Marquis of Tweeddale.

With regard to the Loudoun tree, there is not a shadow of a doubt about it. It grew within two hundred yards of Loudoun Castle, behind what used to be the factors' house, and on the left of the road leading to the Castle.

From the annular rings it appears to have been one hundred and thirty years old, and, allowing for the time we have had it seasoning, it must have been planted between 1765 and 1770. Growing so near the Castle it would be a familiar object to all the Loudoun family who lived while it was growing, and I enclose two newspaper cuttings giving the history of the Loudoun family, which may be interesting to you.

I see from the Encyclopædia Britannica that Robert the Bruce was born in 1274, but his birthplace is uncertain. Lochmaben claims to have been his birthplace, but other authorities connect Turnberry in Ayrshire with that event, because it was his mother's castle. His birthplace is not certainly known, but tradition, in ascribing it to Lochmaben, may be quite correct.

I understand you would get all the particulars from Mr. Martin regarding the old house in Glasgow built by the Argyle family as their town house, and from which a piece of oak was got which is being used in the construction of the chair. Now, I do not think I have much to add, with the exception that I trust you will yourself be pleased with the chair when it is finished, and, as you will be its most critical judge, I am sure every other person connected with it will be delighted. For myself and for the firm I may say that we feel we have been honored in being asked to supply the oak for it, and we look forward with pleasure to hearing of the presentation to the St. Andrew's Society, when you have time.

I remain, yours faithfully,

DAVID HOWATSON.

Another day I went to Mauchline to meet a Mr. McCrone, a relative of Mr. Martin. Mr. McCrone carries on a very large creamery business. He knew the country and its history from beginning to end. A man in the prime of life, somewhere between forty and forty-five years of age, a large, fine-looking man—you hardly ever saw such a splendid specimen of a man. He was at the station to meet me with horse and gig to suit and drove me to his house. He also had an automobile and driver, and in this way flew me over the country like a bird everywhere. Our first run was through the village of Mauchline to Mossgiel, where Burns was a farmer. We didn't get any wood there for the chair, but Mr. McCrone

bought a small box veneered with wood off the roof of the barn on the farm for which he paid ten shillings and six-pence and he gave it to me. Then we ran on again for a while and came to the monument there to Burns, which is more than forty feet high. When we came back into town Mr. McCrone said there was Mr. Thomas Findlay's box factory there where they would be likely to have some wood that would be interesting to us. When he spoke of the box factory I never thought of boxes for trinkets and so forth, but of boxes made from boards. We went to the office and the son of the proprietor showed me some pieces not much thicker than a quarter of an inch, nor longer than six inches. I asked him if he could let me have one of them, but he said he wouldn't dare to unless I saw his father. So Mr. McCrone said: "Well, come, jump into the gig again," and away we drove down to the workshop and saw the father. The father looked at me while I got off my story about the chair that I was going to make and I told him what I wanted. He said he had a piece that he thought would be of some use. It was nearly four feet long and about one inch square. Handing it to me Mr. Findlay said: "I will heartily give you this piece of oak out of the rafters of Mauchline Castle, the residence of Gavin Hamilton, where Burns and Bonny Jean were married. I can vouch for it, because I took it out of the roof myself." I brought it back with me and left it with Mr. Martin to be tied up with the rest of the wood. This piece of oak I have cut in two and worked in one on each side of and adjoining the centre panel.

The chair is, therefore, made up of wood from seven localities — St. Michael's Churchyard in Dumfries, Lochmaben Castle, the bank of the River Nith, the residence of the Dukes of Argyle in Glasgow, Loudoun Castle, the Yester estate in Haddington and Mauchline Castle, and it contains twenty-six pieces, all of which have been accounted for in this narrative.

During the years that have passed since my inception of this idea I had constantly been on the outlook for designs,

but had found nothing with which I was content. After I had secured the wood I turned my efforts in this direction. I went to libraries, book sellers and museums, but did not find anything that would be of assistance until I got a copy of a book entit' "Illustrated History of Furniture from the Earliest to the Present Time" (1899), by Frederick Litchfield, in a shop which is now kept in John Knox's house in Edinburgh. I then went to Holyrood Palace and there I was delighted to find the model of the very chair that I had in mind. I at once produced my pencil and rule and paper and was starting to make a sketch of it, but an old chap with brass buttons was too sharp on the watch and he threatened to at once put me out of the Palace, although I told him what my errand was. I tried to get leave to snap-shot the chair, but he would not allow even that. Another official who was there and heard my talk with the old man, but who had charge of another part of the building, said he was sorry he could not assist me, but he advised me to go to the government office, close to St. Giles' Cathedral, and gave me the name of an official to see; when I got there I had to wait a little over an hour before I saw him; then he told me to write an application and he would forward it to London. I told him that I would be back in Canada before he would receive an answer. I went back to Holyrood and told my friend that I had been defeated. Then he told me about a man whose place was on the Calton Hill, who had been there photographing the rooms and he thought I would be able to buy some photographs from him. So away I went and found the place, and after much searching he discovered two large ones, in both of which are shown Jacobite chairs that are in Holyrood Palace, and I bought both of them. They are much better pictures than I could have made for myself and have been of very great assistance in designing the chair for the Society. When I got to London I again started the searching for chairs. I was advised to try Hampton Court Palace and South Kensington Museum and many other places; the best that I in London were at South

Kensington, where I got three photos. I also tried in Liverpool and Dublin, but could find nothing that would be of assistance. After I got home my friends, the other donors, wrote to a firm of furniture designers in Edinburgh for working drawings, and while these drawings form the basis of the final design, features of the chair in Holyrood and of a design shown in the book I have mentioned have been adopted, but to some extent we have been obliged to be governed by the sizes and shapes of certain pieces of the historical wood that I had the good fortune to secure. The cabinet work has been done by Messrs. J. & J. D. Howe in a most thorough manner.

EPILOGUE.

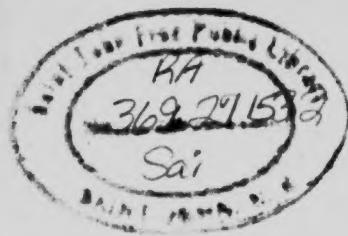
The eighth day of March, 1908, falling upon a Sunday, the chair was on that day without ceremony tendered to the President on behalf of the Society, and on the evening of the following day, at a special meeting of the Society, it was formally presented.

On the next page appears a copy of the inscription on brass affixed to the back of the chair.

The ode entitled "The Presidents' Chair," in which it is represented as extending greetings to the President and delivering its message to the Society, was composed for the donors by a talented member who desires to remain anonymous.

This Chair
Constructed of
Historic oak and holly grown in
Scotland
was presented to
Saint Andrew's Society
of
Saint John, New Brunswick
by
P. Robertson Inches
J. Gordon Forbes
James F. Robertson
John Rogerson
John P. Macintyre
Thomas A. Rankine (ob.)
Murray MacLaren
Beverley A. Macauay
J. Roy Campbell
Robert B. Paterson
James Jack
J. Robertson McIntosh
on
the eighth day of March, A.D. 1908
being the
One Hundred and Tenth Anniversary
of the founding of the
Society

John Rogerson
Designer and Carver



614

THE PRESSES' CHAIR.

[BY A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY]

“Hail to the Chief”—’tis thus I greet
The Preses who shall fill my seat,
And may he ever justice mete
Each brother Scot;
The record of his life complete
Without a blot.

To mind ye of auld Scotia’s hills,
To stir the blood that never chills,
The heart of oak within me thrills
With strong delight,
And quickens all the flowing rills
Of memory bright.

And ever in my honored place,
Mine be the welcome task, to trace
The glories of our ancient race
To clansmen here;
The deeds of valor, honour, grace,
But naught of fear.

To all of Scottish blood I bring
The message—“Fear God, honour King,”
That every loyal heart may ring
As true as steel;
To friendship, home and Empire cli. g
With Scottish zeal.